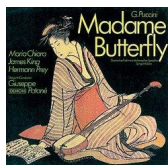


Puccini – Madama Butterfly (Patane) [1996]

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 25 October 2009 16:20 - Last Updated Tuesday, 25 March 2014 23:36

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Act 1 1-1 Introduction 1:02 1-2 E Soffito E Pareti 5:03 1-3 Dovunque Al Mondo Lo Yanko 3:50 1-4 Amore E Grillo 3:25 1-5 Ancora Un Passo Or Via 2:56 1-6 Gran Ventura 3:28 1-7 L'Imperial Commisario 2:56 1-8 Vieni, Amor Mio! 2:42 1-9 Ieri Son Salita Tuua Sola 1:44 1-10 Tuuti Zitti! 1:17 1-11 Madame Butterfly 2:11 1-12 Cio-Cio-San! 2:38 1-13 Bimba, Bimba, Non Piangere 5:40 1-14 Bimba Daglia Occhi 3:24 1-15 Vogliatemi Bene 7:02 Act 2 - Scene 1 1-16 E Izaghi Ed Izamami 7:01 1-17 Un Bel Di 4:14 2-1 C'è Entrate 4:17 2-2 Yamadori, Ancor Le Pene 4:32 2-3 Ora A Noi 3:10 2-4 Due Cose Potrei Far 1:59 2-5 Ah! M'ha Scordata? 4:38 2-6 Io Scendo Al Piano 3:09 2-7 Il Cannone Del Porto! 3:17 2-8 Tutti I Fior? 3:41 2-9 Or Vienmi Ad Adornar 5:10 2-10 Humming Chorus 3:23 Act 2 - Scene 2 2-11 Oh Eh! Oh Eh! 7:03 2-12 Già Il Sole! 4:23 2-13 Io So Che Alle Sue Pene 3:24 2-14 Addio, Fiorito Asil 2:51 2-15 Suzuki, Suzuki 6:15 2-16 Come Una Mosca 2:59 2-17 "Con Onor Muore..." 4:43
Maria Chiara – Cio Cio San (soprano) Trudeliene Schmidt – Suzuki (mezzo-soprano) James King – Pinkerton (tenor) Hermann Prey – Sharpless (baritone) Chor des Bayerischen Rundfunk Munchner Rundfunkorchester Giuseppe Patané – Conductor

The story upon which the libretto of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* is based is an amalgam of a narrative by John Luther Long, a Philadelphia lawyer, and the play derived from that narrative by playwright and theatrical producer, David Belasco. Long claimed to have based his story on incidents related to him by his sister, the wife of a missionary stationed in Nagasaki. However, it is difficult to believe that the author would not have known Pierre Loti's popular novel, *Madame Chrysanthème*, published first in French in 1887 and soon after in English translation. Indeed, much of the plot is contained in the French novel with some notable exceptions.

Madame Chrysanthème is the first-person narrative of a young naval officer, Pierre, who enters into a temporary marriage with a geisha while stationed in Japan. The loosely autobiographical novel (Loti himself had a temporary Japanese wife) details the "little adventure" from his arrival in Nagasaki -- including his engagement of a marriage broker, his relationship with

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Chrysanthème, and his eventual departure. The central character here is clearly Pierre; he is every bit as callous as the Pinkerton of Puccini's first Act. Chrysanthème is practical, unemotional and secondary. They part amicably; the final scenes portray the geisha testing the silver dollars she received in fulfillment of the marriage contract and a rather tepid leave-taking:

Come my little mousmee [the term used by the French for their Japanese wives], let us part good friends. Let us even embrace, if you wish. I took you for my own amusement and, although you may not have been a total success, you gave me what you could: your little body, your respect, and your quaint music. All in all, you have been sweet enough in your Nipponese way. And, who knows, perhaps I shall think of you from time to time, in a roundabout way, when I recall this glorious summer, the pretty gardens, and the music of the cicadas.

Long's story, "Madam Butterfly," used the French novel as a structural model but his attention is firmly held by the eponymous geisha. His 18-page story (misleadingly referred to as a "novel" in Puccini's correspondence) first appeared in the January 1898 issue of Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine. Lieutenant Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton (the name itself is an ironic accentuation of his role as the American intruder) of the United States Navy marries the young Cho-Cho-San, nicknamed "Madam Butterfly," and forces her to relinquish all ties to her friends and family. Unlike her counterpart in Madame Chrysanthème, the naïve Butterfly believes that her marriage is real, and she allows herself to fall in love. Pinkerton departs with his ship, promising to return. During his absence, Butterfly gives birth to his child. She names the boy Trouble, a name she plans to change to Joy when she reunites with her husband. When Pinkerton's ship finally does return, Butterfly learns that he has married an American woman who wishes to take Butterfly's child back to the United States. Butterfly attempts suicide but survives and is bandaged in the amateurish but moving final scene of the story.

Long's story was wildly popular with a public fascinated by the exotic. Many famed actresses approached him for the dramatic rights, but it was David Belasco, himself at the peak of his fame, who adapted Butterfly for the stage. Contrary to numerous reports, Belasco wrote the stage version without Long's assistance. However, the playwright borrowed liberally from the magazine story and therefore much of the dialogue is indeed Long's. The play had only one act and was produced as part of a double bill with a farce entitled Naughty Anthony, also by Belasco. The entire action of the play takes place two years after Pinkerton's departure. Thus the focus is almost entirely on Butterfly and her maid. Pinkerton makes an ignominious entrance toward the conclusion of the play, inspiring and witnessing Butterfly's (this time successful) suicide. Belasco's tragic ending was coupled with another innovation that impressed Puccini: the 14-minute vigil wherein Butterfly silently awaits Pinkerton's arrival. Belasco vividly depicted the night's shadows through creative lighting effects.

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Once again, the exotic setting played a major role in the success of Butterfly. The lack of familiarity with Japanese culture served not only as a point of interest but also as a form of insulation from the play's tragic conclusion. The London Times reported, "in any other than an exotic setting, the dramatic episode would be intolerably painful." It was this London production that Puccini witnessed in the summer of 1900.

The libretto of Madama Butterfly is one of those rare instances in operatic history where the text is actually an improvement over its sources. The dimensions of the opera, the finely etched depictions of its characters, its inexorable progress to its dénouement, and the beautiful verses and dialogue constructed by Giuseppe Giacosa all stand in marked contrast to the writings discussed above. Coupled with Puccini's emotionally charged musical score, Madama Butterfly produces an effect at once intimate and overwhelming, a haunting portrayal of the dangers of misguided love. ---Chadwick Jenkins, columbia.edu

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